Excessive fluoride in Gujarat

1000. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of serious situation arising in 4341 habitations in Gujarat with excessive fluoride;

(b) what action is being taken by the Ministry to assist the Government of Gujarat; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to establish Fluorosis Mitigation Centre at Gandhi Nagar in Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI A. NARENDRA): (a) As per the water quality survey ordered by the Government of India and as reported by the Government of Gujarat, 4,341 rural habitations were affected with excess fluoride in drinking water, as on 31/3/2004.

(b) Rural drinking water is a State subject. Government of India provides financial and technical assistance to States through a Centrally Sponsored scheme, namely Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP), for supply of drinking water as per the stipulated norms. Upto February 2006, State Governments including Gujarat State were fully empowered to sanction and implement projects for tackling water quality problems, for which 15% of annual ARWSP funds released to States, were specifically earmarked. In order to provide focused attention to tackle water quality problems, Sub-Mission guidelines under ARWSP have been revised in February 2006, wherein, 20% of ARWSP funds is retained at the Centre and released to water quality affected States only on need-basis for focused funding after the State Governments submit formal requests along with the list of projects, habitation-wise, sanctioned by its State Level Scheme Sanctioning Committee. Formal proposal from Government of Gujarat is still awaited for released of funds.

Under the Bharat Nirman programme, all rural habitations including uncovered (Not covered/Partially covered) habitations, slipped back habitations and water quality problem habitations are intended to be provided with safe drinking water in a phased manner during the period 2005-06 to 2008-09.

(c) A proposal to establish the Fluoride Mitigation Centre at Gandhinagar, Gujarat has been received.